




## Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting held on Tuesday 1 February 2023, 5.30 pm, via Zoom

Present: Brian Message (BM), Chair of Trustees  
Chris Meddle (CM), Vice Chair of Trustees  
Gary Weston (GW), Trustee  
Rebecca Ryan (RR), Trustee  
James Nicholson (JN), Trustee  
Andrew Goulding (AEG), Trustee & CEO

In attendance: David McMillan (DRM), Finance Director  
Debbie Warner, Clerk

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| 1. | <b>Apologies</b>  |
|    | There were no apologies received. RJ was not present at the meeting.  |
| 2. | <b>Declaration of interests</b>   |
|    | Rebecca Ryan: Solicitor for EPM   |
| 3. | <b>To approve minutes of meeting 6/12/2023</b>  |
|    | The minutes of the meeting were deemed to be an accurate account of proceedings. There were no matters arising from the minutes and were signed off by the Chair.   |
| 4. | <b>CEO's Report</b>   |
|    | The CEO reported on the first day of a series of 4 strikes by NEU. It was noted by Trustees that GBA had the most number of staff which is likely to affect the normal working day of the school. The CEO gave a breakdown of strikers in the Trust schools. In addition to striking members of staff there is also staff sickness and other members of staff who are required to look after their children. It is necessary for HBK to close year groups 7-10 and provision was made for vulnerable and key worker children but numbers who attended were very small.  |
| 5. | <b>Merger Discussion</b>  |
|    | <p>The CEO said a lot of work has been going on in the background between the 2 trusts, comparing and harmonising policies. Governance information has been circulated with definitive list of trustees who wish to continue and a shadow board has been set up with the first meeting on 7 February. The CEO said that the purpose of these meetings will be to oversee the process. Assessment of the risks is being evaluated by the other Trust and assessment is being carried out on how to mitigate any risk. The CEO went through likely timeline and advised Trustees that information will be put forward to the advisory board in February which will mean agreement in principle to merge has been granted. A suite of policies and operating procedures will need to be finalised and then a formal consultation process with unions can commence, which is likely to be just after Easter. A PR specialist has been appointed to manage PR and communications for the merger. We are anticipating the first set of communication will go out after the shadow board meeting.</p> <p>The CEO said the shadow board will agree terms of reference and harmonise policies and produce a risk assessment for the merger and agree a timescale and discuss any hurdles or concerns from either side and this will take place monthly. Should a summary of how the shadow board goes and this is likely to be done by the appointment PR.</p> <p><b>Questioning/challenge:</b><br/> <b>Q: A Trustee asked whether there had been any concern over the proposed merger for stakeholders</b><br/> <b>A: The CEO had not received any communication from parents or wider community but staff had been nervous in the early stages of the process but no recent concerns have been noted since the letter circulated to staff before Christmas. The CEO was hopeful that the letter reassured staff.</b><br/> A confidential discussion followed on which of the 2 trusts should be dissolved.</p> <p><b>Questioning/challenge:</b><br/> <b>Q: A Trustee enquired on the likelihood of the go-ahead of the special school in Spaldwick.</b><br/> <b>A: The CEO thought this is unlikely to proceed</b></p> |

Signed:   
Date: 02/05/2023

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|    | <p>Trustees expressed concern over the finances of the school and asked whether the school could benefit from the closure of a nearby school, Gt Gidding<br/>The CEO was unsure where these pupils would go and was aware that Brington is currently full.</p> <p><b>ACTION: CEO TO LIAISE WITH S EARDLEY REGARDING PUPILS AT GT GIDDING PRIMARY SCHOOL</b></p>  |
| 6. | Finance Update (DRM)   |
|    | <p>The Finance Director provided a verbal finance update. Revised budget is in line with where finances should be. However, Dfe will be providing additional funding to cover cost of living and pay awards. Fuel costs have gone up in region of 90%. SEND at HBK is currently challenging a lack of funding from the Dfe. A grant from the government to promote energy efficiencies in the Trust is to be received, in the region of £120,000 which will enable Estates to install additional LED lighting at GCA and replace an old oil boiler at SPS. The provision of heat source pumps at HBK are being considered. The installation of external doors at CA is also likely to benefit from this additional funding and any other work which is deemed appropriate.</p> <p><b>Questioning/challenge:</b></p> <p><b>Q: A Trustee noted the condition and inefficiency of computers and IT equipment in some of the schools and enquired whether any upgrades are planned</b></p> <p><b>A: The Finance Director said there is the possibility of 1:1 devices being given to students</b></p> <p><b>Q: The Chair of the Finance Committee was concerned about the cost of installation of heat source pumps and the savings were likely to be negligible.</b></p> <p><b>A: The Finance Director agreed that the cost of installation could prohibit this initiative.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION: FINANCE DIRECTOR AND CHAIR OF FINANCE COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS FURTHER HEAT SOURCE PUMPS AT HBK</b></p> |
| 7. | AOB  |
|    | Reminder to Trustees to complete outstanding safeguarding training.  |

Meeting closed at 7.10pm